

**SCHOOLING, WORK EXPERIENCE, AND GENDER:
THE SOCIAL REPRODUCTION OF POVERTY
IN MINING REGIONS**

by

Sally Maggard

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ABSTRACT: Decades of government interventions, an improved infrastructure, and support for industrialization have not resolved problems of persistent regional and subregional poverty in Central Appalachia. This research investigates characteristics of poverty previously overlooked in development initiatives and research on Appalachian poverty. In particular it demonstrates the role of gender in the social reproduction of poverty in selected Appalachian counties.

Data are drawn from structured interviews with working class women active in two union organizing campaigns in the early 1970s. Analysis of qualitative data on lifetime experiences in market and non-market labor, experiences in public schools and manpower training programs, and structure and operation of households reveals that work and school are understood through a gendered lens.

Range of economic opportunity, severely restricted for both males and females in an economy dominated by coal mining, is further limited for females by a gendered division of labor which equates women's work with employment in low wage occupational sectors or non-market marginalized labor. Further, gender configures a particular female status in households and families which influences whether or not women acquire skills and qualifications needed to compete in highly restricted labor markets. Individual initiatives to acquire skills and enter paid labor result in contested gender statuses.

Gender ideology, gendered status within households, and a constricted sex segregated economic opportunity structure combine to place women at economic risk in these counties. Gender and family structure intersect with rural labor market structure and are implicated in persistent poverty.

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INTRODUCTION

My mother got real sick and had to have surgery. For two years [she] wasn't able to do anything. I just quit school and took all the responsibility of the family.

--Ardena Wheeler, Pike County, KY.

I don't think I ever had a job in a union place. Women didn't get nothing for their labor. We worked harder than men. That's the truth now. And we got less pay. I think I worked for a dollar and a quarter an hour.

--Ruby Stacy, Harlan County, KY.

On April 24, 1964, U.S. President Lyndon Johnson, First Lady Lady Bird Johnson, several high ranking government officials, and members of the national press corps boarded six Army helicopters. They flew into the Central Appalachian coalfields, crossed over the West Virginia-Kentucky boarder, and landed just outside of Inez, a coal town of about 900 people in Martin County, Kentucky. The entourage traveled by bus through Inez, six miles on up Rural Route 3, and stopped at the home of Tom Fletcher, a 38-year-old unemployed coal miner who was married and had eight children. From Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher's front porch, President Johnson fired the first shot of a federal "War on Poverty".

Central Appalachia¹ was both the site of the origin of the War on Poverty and the battleground on which much of it was fought. Twenty-five years later the region remains a classic example of persistent poverty and underdevelopment in advanced capitalist economies. Decades of government interventions, an improved infrastructure, and support for industrialization have not resolved the problems of regional and subregional poverty in Central Appalachia.

Most social scientists have moved away from pejorative cultural explanations of Appalachian poverty.² Limitations of such approaches have been exposed (Billings, 1974; Fisher 1976; Walls and Billings 1978), and more powerful analyses of persistent poverty in capitalist economies have been applied to Appalachia. The result has been an emphasis on such factors as land and resources ownership, class relations, industrial base, and labor markets (Appalachian Land Ownership Task Force 1983; Eller 1982; Walls 1978; Seltzer 1985; Banks 1983-84, 1980; Clark 1981; Corbin 1981; Gaventa 1980; Tickamyer and Tickamyer 1987; Tickamyer and Duncan 1984).

Recently scholars have begun to pay serious attention to gender as a factor which shapes economic vulnerability in Appalachia. There is growing recognition that gender and family structure are implicated in poverty in general (Pearce and McAdoo 1981; Scott 1984; Sarvasy and Van Allen 1984; Kamerman 1984), and scholars have begun to apply this insight in their research on Appalachian poverty (Tickamyer and Bokemeier 1988; Tickamyer and Tickamyer 1986).

This paper is informed by the current research interest in the relationships between region, work, gender, and family structure in Appalachian poverty. In particular, I look at ways gender shapes work

experiences and schooling. Gender intersects with the acquisition of skills and qualifications and operates as an important factor in the social reproduction of poverty.

THE RESEARCH

Data analyzed for this paper come from my research on women's involvement in two union organizing drives in eastern Kentucky in the early 1970s (Maggard 1988). One was a coal strike in Harlan County, Kentucky, which broke out in 1973, lasted thirteen months, and resulted in union representation under the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) for 180 coal miners. This strike was at Duke Power Company's mine at Brookside, Kentucky, and also resulted in the formation of the now-famous Brookside Women's Club featured in the film, "Harlan County, U.S.A."

The second strike was in Pike County, Kentucky. It broke out in 1972 at one of eastern Kentucky's largest hospitals, the Pikeville Methodist Hospital. Over 200 nonprofessional employees, almost all of whom were women, maintained a twenty-four hour picket line for more than two years in an unsuccessful attempt to win union representation under the Communication Workers of America (CWA).³

Both of these strikes lasted a long time. Strikers and their supporters were pitted against powerful, entrenched elites. There were repeated violent confrontations which left residents on both sides of the struggles feeling as if they were under siege.

In both strikes, women were at the forefront. They planned strike strategy, peopled picket lines, argued with union officials, personally faced their opposition, dealt with the press, testified in court, devised behind-the-scenes tactics to try to win their strikes, and went to jail.

In the course of my research on women's involvement in these strikes, I conducted structured interviews with forty-four participants. I collected life history and demographic data from each woman, as well as data on strike actions. My analysis of data on market and non-market labor histories of these women, experiences in public schools and manpower training programs, and the structure and operation of households allows me to examine correlates of poverty for women in the eastern Kentucky counties where these strikes occurred.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PAPER

First, I describe the particular economic vulnerabilities which burden women in the political economy of Central Appalachia. Second, I describe the market and non-market labor histories of women in my study. Third, I describe their experiences in public school and various educational programs. Finally, I discuss the gendered lens through which work and schooling are understood in these counties.

GENDER AND APPALACHIA'S POLITICAL ECONOMY

Pike County and Harlan County, Kentucky, are typical Central Appalachian counties. Local labor markets are dominated by one industry: coal mining. Political structures are tightly controlled by corporate interests. For the majority of residents, making a good, honest living is and has been a tough proposition.

In 1970, just before the strikes broke out, the structure of the local economy spelled limited opportunity and poverty for most residents. Income and earnings data, poverty status, unemployment and underemployment figures, and range of economic opportunity are all measures of economic viability. Data on these measures are summarized in Tables 1 through 4 and demonstrate the impoverished character of the local economies of Pike and Harlan Counties.

For women the situation in these counties in 1970 was particularly severe. Local labor markets in Central Appalachia are extremely sex segregated. Women are in an especially vulnerable position in such labor markets. Aside from women whose training prepares them for coveted and politically controlled jobs in the educational sector, women find paid employment in personal service jobs, health services, retail sales, and (in certain other areas of the region) tourism and light manufacturing. Wages in these sectors are low, work is non-union, and benefits are poor to non-existent.⁴

Tables 5 and 6 illustrate this sex segregation in the local labor markets in Pike and Harlan Counties in 1970. Table 1 indicates the consequences: median earnings were \$5,995 and \$5,682 respectively in Pike and Harlan Counties for men; for women, these figures drop sharply: \$2,694 in Pike County and \$2,611 in Harlan County.

Not only do women have few options for economic independence; women are also in vulnerable positions as dependent members of working class households. Many women live in households which rely completely or in large part on wages earned in mining. While mining has occasionally paid relatively high wages, it is a highly volatile industry subject to great swings in the demand for coal and for coal miners' labor. Women in such households have long been subject to sudden loss of income and to the recurrent unemployment of male household members employed in mining.

This situation is exacerbated by the high injury and death rates in mining. Women never know whether the coal miners supporting their families are going to be disabled on the job or, for that matter, return from work at all. In 1970, 16.4% of the women over age fourteen in Harlan County were widows, compared with 13.1% in Kentucky as a whole (Table 7). Widowhood contributes to the large number of female-headed families in 1970 in the county: 15.2% compared with 10.7% for the state as a whole (Table 8).

In summary, labor market status and dependent household status mean that Appalachian women are particularly vulnerable to entering poverty, remaining poor, or slipping in and out of poverty.

GENDER AND WORK EXPERIENCES IN PIKE AND HARLAN COUNTIES

What sort of work do women do when they have few employment opportunities and when their families and households are continuously at risk? I asked forty-four women to identify all the jobs they have held and to talk about "work" in their lives. In recording their stories I developed a deep appreciation for their ingenuity, stamina, and good spirit. Taken together these women have done just about everything you can imagine to make a living and take care of families in the context of very limited economic opportunity.

"Work" is something these women do all the time. Sometimes they get paid money for doing it. Sometimes it is what they do in running households. Sometimes work has been challenging and fun. Other times work has been "brutish", as one woman described her job at the Pikeville Methodist Hospital. All the time, "work" is underway.

In this section of the paper I review work these women have done as children and as adults. Their descriptions of work defy easy categorization. Still, several themes emerge from my open-ended inquiry into the actual processes which surround their work experiences.

First, all of the women began an intense pace of work when they were very young children and continued this pace throughout their lives. Second, the work these women described can best be understood as social activity. It is embedded in a variety of relationships which shape the form, content, and patterns of work, and give work its meaning⁵. Third, patterns and meaning of work changed for these women as a result of their participation in the strikes.

"YOU GO AND TAKE CARE OF YOUR GRANNY. SHE'S REAL BAD OFF."

All of the women I interviewed started working at an intense pace when they were young children. Their childhood labor took place in the formal and the informal economy. In all cases it was shaped by their status as female children within households and families.

Consider the following account from one of the hospital strikers:

After my mother died I didn't get to go [to school]. I was the only girl at home. I was working, but at home. I'd go places and help people out where there was a new born baby. Do their cooking and washing and ironing. If anybody was down sick, I went and helped. Most of the time I didn't get money because they didn't have the money to pay.

I helped take care of my step-mother's sister until two weeks before she died. Then my grandmother, she was real bad off. My daddy come from seeing her and said, "You go and take care of your granny." I went in early fall, and I stayed till my grandmother died in March or April.

Aunt Meg had arthritis so bad she had to walk around on crutches. They had a big family, and they run a saw mill. Aunt Meg could sit and peal potatoes, but I did the rest of it. I washed on the board for them. They was four of the boys at home. By the time I'd get through washing their overalls and work clothes plus all their other clothes, I'll tell you, that was a job!⁶

The work she was expected to do as a female child is a poignant example of the influence of gender on non-market children's labor in Central Appalachia.

As children, many of the women earned cash for their labor. They turned this income over to families to help financially pressed households survive. For instance, one of the women who participated in the coal strike recalled crawling over slate dumps and picking up lumps of coal to sell:

I picked up coal along the tram track. I've had the motormans to kick it off. I've went down on the slate fill and asked, "Do you care for me to [be] picking coal out of the slate and selling it?" "No," they'd say. And I went to selling it.

She had other strategies for generating family income:

I'd hit the tops of them mountains, the tip spurs of them yonder, with a half bushel tub and a water bucket, and pick them full of berries. Take them down here where this filling station is at Coxton. They'd say, "We don't need them, but to help you we will." They would give me fifty cents a gallon. So, I would take that. I'd get what we needed.

Another of the Harlan County women had various odd jobs when she was a young girl living in coal camps:

At times I would baby sit for people up in the camp. Make extra money. [Mother] house cleaned for people, baby sat, and washed and ironed while Dad worked in the mines. I've done other jobs in the camp, house cleaning. Stuff like that. Wash and iron.

By the time they were teenagers, many of the women had paying jobs. All of these jobs were in low waged sectors of the local economy. They included personal services (housekeeping, dry cleaning, laundry), food services (cooking, serving, dishwashing), farm work (tending gardens, harvesting), and retail (sales). For instance, one of the hospital strikers worked for a dairy farmer in Pike County as a teenager:

My first job was a collector for Hopkins' Dairy. I was 16 years old. I made \$16 a week, which was good money. My brother delivered the milk. We delivered twice a day. I made out all the milk bills. He would deliver it, and I would collect for it.

Another hospital striker got her first paying job in a laundry:

In the dry cleaners over in Pikeville. I worked for \$25 a week. Oh, my goodness! Pressed. I checked out. I started in as check out girl, and then I went to pressing.

These jobs also generated income which was expected to go toward keeping households viable.

For all the women, paid and unpaid labor during childhood was linked to status inside households and families. Their work as young family members was taken for granted, assumed to be a household resource. It may be understood as part of the household's economic landscape.

WOMEN, WORK, AND HOUSEHOLDS: TRANSITION TO ADULT YEARS

The nature of children's work and understandings of female childhood labor were similar in both groups of women. The nature of work as adults, however, was different. To understand the differences it is necessary to locate women's work in the actual social relations in which it is embedded in these counties.

Of the twenty-four hospital strikers I interviewed, all had worked for wages before their strike (Table 9). They had held a wide variety of jobs, and most had fairly continuous histories in paid labor. In contrast, none of the twenty Harlan County women I interviewed held paying jobs at the time of the strike. Further, their

labor market experiences were limited in comparison with the hospital strikers. Six of them had never held a paying job of any kind (Table 9).

These differences are linked to differences in women's roles in households. Half of the hospital strikers were heads of households at the time of their strike (Table 10). The rest contributed a major share of the economic base of their households. The Pikeville strikers saw themselves as hospital workers, family breadwinners, and as homemakers. They cleaned the hospital, fed its staff and patients, took care of sick people, and ran the hospital office. Then they took their wages home, provided for other family members, and managed households.

In contrast, all of the Harlan County women were members of traditional nuclear family households (Table 10). These households depended on a single (male) wage earner and were structured by a traditional division of labor. All but one of the women were married and living with husbands and their own children (Table 10). The exception was a very young, recently divorced woman who had returned to her parents' home with her new baby.⁷

The ideology of the male breadwinner (i.e. coal miner) is very strong in eastern Kentucky. In the early 1970s this ideology conformed to reality among the twenty Harlan County women. All of them saw themselves as housewives when they got involved in the strike. Almost all said they had always expected they would be housewives. Their self images informed the work they did. They saw to the needs of large numbers of children, took care of household affairs in the midst of harsh living conditions in coal camps, and managed wages earned by coal mining husbands.

In what follows I use excerpts from the women's work histories to illustrate the links between household status and operation and the two patterns of adult women's labor I found in Pike County and Harlan County.

WOMEN AT WORK: BREADWINNERS, HOMEMAKERS, AND HOUSEWIVES

The hospital strikers had more varied experiences in waged labor than the Harlan County women. Most of the jobs they described were in low waged sectors of the economy, reflecting the restricted range of economic opportunity open to women in the coal fields. They had worked in personal and health services, retail sales, and restaurant work (Appendix I). Some women, who had worked in other parts of the country, also had experiences in low wage manufacturing.

One of these woman, for instance, worked during her early twenties in a unionized defense plant in Michigan during World War II:

It was during the war. Chrysler DeSoto Plant that made B29s and B39 bombers. I was riveter. I was listed as a repairman right at the last of my work. They didn't have a listing for a "repairwoman". So I was a "repairman".

She has also worked as a sales clerk, a clothes steamer in a laundry, a salads cook at a Holiday Inn, and a cafeteria worker in the hospital. Of all her jobs, she liked being a riveter the best:

I liked my work in Michigan better than anything. It was great. It folded up when the war was over. [It was] real good pay. You couldn't get a job like that here. That job was fun.

Of the Harlan County women who had worked for wages before the coal strike, only six had worked at jobs in Harlan County. These six women had worked in personal services, gardens and farm fields, restaurants, and retail sales. They had held these jobs as teenagers to add to family income.

As adults, several of these women had been employed outside of Harlan County. One woman from this group had also worked in a defense plant during World War II. She had the most varied history of paid labor in this group. Another woman had worked as a nurse's aide in Michigan.

Some women had worked in cities where they had moved when their husbands could find no work in the coal mines. During these dislocations they worked in light manufacturing jobs, at a laundry, and house cleaning. Their waged work was in rhythm with economic slumps in the demand for coal miners wages.

A traditional household division of labor also shaped the rhythm of waged labor among these women. One woman explained that she worked "by the seasons", interrupting her employment for home work. Her "seasons" were determined by the school year and by a gendered understanding of who was responsible for child care:

I just worked nine months out of the year while the kids were in school. In the summer time, why I'd have to quit and stay home until school started back again.

In one job she assembled picture frames:

We would put picture frames together. Fix, made, put the pictures in, and sealed them. Shipped them out to K-Marts and Woolworths. Places like that. Some were even shipped all the way to Texas. Just made pictures for every where.

In another job she packed doughnuts:

I worked on the conveyor packing doughnuts in boxes. You talk about fast work, now that was fast!

None of her jobs paid well or was unionized, and she was quite aware that women were being exploited for cheap labor:

I don't think I ever had a job in a union place. Back then you didn't get nothing. Women didn't get nothing for their labor. We worked harder than men. That's the truth now. And we got less pay. I think I worked for a dollar and a quarter an hour.

In both groups of women, paid labor was always coupled with non-market labor. The intense pace of work these women had begun as children continued throughout their adult years, and much of their work remained centered around household and family. One woman described her home labor during most of her marriage:

We raised chickens and turkeys and everything here. Hogs. I have a big garden. Yards to mow and mow and mow. I plow my own garden. Paint the house. I've put roof on the house, sheet rock on the house. We floored it. We added on two rooms. I paneled that hallway myself.

Work for all the women was always in very harsh conditions, whether it was market or non-market labor. Work at the hospital illustrates the former, and work in homes at the Brookside coal camp illustrates the latter.

The women who went on strike against the hospital worked in housekeeping, the kitchen and dietary department, the business office, and as nurse's aides. Their working conditions were deplorable, pay was low, departments were understaffed, benefits were poor to non-existent, and conditions had steadily declined over a period of several years. A nurse's aide described the pressure she was under just before the strike:

You work like a dog. Work for 89 cents an hour for years trying to raise six kids on it. Then \$1.05. Then \$1.10. You couldn't get the [patients] all fed and bathed. The work load was too heavy. It just got till you couldn't handle it, and I guess it was [strike] or quit.

The women reported a list of grievances that was staggering. The average wage among nonprofessionals at the hospital in 1972 was \$1.68 a hour. Women had been working at the hospital for twenty years or more for almost the same low wage at which they had been hired. One nurse's aide came out on strike making \$1.87 an hour after thirty-one years of employment at the hospital. Above all, in every department, employees complained of excessive work loads. They felt they were not able to do their jobs properly or provide quality care because the hospital was seriously understaffed.

One hospital kitchen employee summed up work at the hospital this way:

I always loved to work. I was brought up to work. But I think that there is brutish work that hurts. We really had that there at the hospital.

Work as homemakers in the Brookside coal camp was under equally harsh conditions. Many of the women who got involved in the coal strike lived in a coal camp near the Brookside mine. When Duke Power Company purchased the Brookside mine, it also purchased the coal camp and a company store from the former owners. Duke did little to improve the dilapidated camp houses and unsanitary conditions in the camp.

Since the camp was located so near mining operations, women faced a never ending problem of cleaning away coal dust, grime, and soot. Lack of adequate plumbing and running water made housework and family care particularly arduous. A few camp residents had installed their own plumbing, but during the strike the company cut off the water supply. Even in normal times water service was irregular. According to one woman:

The water has been so bad it has been black. I would take a cloth and strain it and they would be a scum, old mine dust, just like dirt. Coal dust on the cloth (Sherry 1974:48).

The camp was so unsanitary during the strike that the Harlan County health department ruled it highly contaminated with fecal bacteria in 1973.

Living conditions in the coal camp became a major issue in the strike. A "Citizens Public Inquiry" concerning the strike addressed the quality of life at Brookside:

Conditions there take one back a century or more in time. The houses are in rows, each with four rooms. There is no running water; an outdoor spigot serves each row of houses. The water comes from a well owned by the mining company. Apparently the pipes are rusty, as the quality of the water is very poor. Privies line what was once a beautiful creek, but which is now an open sewer (Sherry 1974).

Before turning to the question of the impact of strike involvement on women's work as housewives or as hospital employees it is helpful to consider the reasons women gave for going to work at the Pikeville hospital. I have argued above that a particular household status -- namely head of household or essential contributor to household income -- is linked to hospital employees' participation in the labor market. In what follows I show that additional factors pulled or pushed these women into the formal economy.

Economic need is the most frequent reason hospital strikers gave for why they went to work at the hospital. In every case this need was expressed in terms of family and household status. For example, one woman who divorced her husband after ten years in an abusive marriage said:

I had four little girls to raise. I thought if I could get a day shift and work when they was in school, then I could make enough to support me and the kids.

A nurse's aide said:

I have to work. I had a family that I had to support, although you didn't make enough money to really keep them. You fed them and that was about it.

Two close friends had worked twenty and thirty-one years respectively as nurse's aides at the hospital. One said:

We both had to work because we were raising our children. Whatever they told us to do, we just done it. You didn't say, "I don't want to do that," or "I can't do this." If you had, they would have sent you home, honey.

Low wages and a desire to improve family standard of living meant that many hospital employees worked at additional jobs whenever possible. One nurse's aide raised four children this way:

I've did odds and ends work all my life. When I worked on the day shift, I used to work at a steak house in the evening three nights a week to make enough money for me and the kids. I have cleaned houses of an evening after I get off from work. I have worked at motels, cleaned rooms, worked in kitchens, washed dishes. Just anything to make an honest dollar.

She bought and furnished her own home, holds down at least one paying job all the time, and personally landscapes her hillside around her home.

Some women went to work at the hospital as the result of federal jobs training programs.⁸ One woman explained how she got her job in the hospital kitchen:

I went to the unemployment office for work. Me and my husband separated, and I didn't have no way of keeping up the kids. They told me about this program up at the hospital. They'd pay me for going to school. Special diet course: how to fix diets for diabetics, and people with heart trouble and high cholesterol. I really enjoyed it. After that was over they hired me at the hospital. I was making just about the same as they was paying me through that government-minimum wage. I didn't use that [training]. It didn't help me a bit. The only way it helped me was getting the job. They did hire me after the program was over.

Several women left other jobs, hoping to earn more at the hospital. A woman from the housekeeping department said:

I'd work three and four days, sometimes five, house cleaning in Pikeville. I thought maybe I might make a little more money there. I didn't make too awful much more.

Still, economic need was not the sole motivation for holding down the jobs these women described. One woman who said she "just signed up" at the hospital after her husband died wanted to maintain her independence:

All three of my kids was married. So, I could have lived with one of them.
But I didn't want to.

For another woman employment was a source of social interaction:

I had been baby sitting. I needed the work. We was paying for this place and his [husband] work wasn't all that steady. I didn't want to come home and sit here by myself.

Several women saw work as good for their mental and physical health, despite the poor working conditions at the hospital. A woman in housekeeping said:

My husband had died. I didn't have to work. I more or less took the job because I just needed something to do.

A woman from the kitchen department said:

I've had to work for what I got. Nobody handed it to me on a silver spoon. I worked when I was married for us to have more. Or for peace of mind. I guess I'm not satisfied if I'm not doing something.

And another woman from the kitchen department said:

My husband was sick with black lung and hadn't got his retirement. I had two children in college. I just about had to go to work. The doctor had told me to go to work. I was at the age where I needed to be out.

Some women talked about their jobs as an approximation of careers they might have pursued in other circumstances. One nurse's aide, who had been at the hospital fifteen years when she came out on strike, illustrates this sentiment:

I never had the money to take the real nurse's training. I was always interested in nursing. That was my dream from eleven years up. I didn't work just for my paycheck. I needed the paycheck. But I [also] worked because I enjoyed my work.

WOMEN'S WORK: CHANGES AFTER THE STRIKES

Work changed for both groups of women after their involvement in the two union organizing drives. Strike participation had a definite impact on women's work, but the effects were different in Pike County from Harlan County. I discuss each case in turn.

For many of the Pike County women, the strike meant an end to their hospital employment. Many women lost their jobs at the hospital, probably because they took leadership positions in the strike. Some were never called back despite court orders to offer to reinstate all strikers. Some women returned but were

subsequently laid off. A few retired, although they have had difficulty collecting retirement benefits from the hospital.

Strike participation hampered the ability to find replacement jobs and lessened women's ability to compete in an already restricted female labor market. Replacement jobs they did find were in low waged sectors of the local economy. One woman came up with this business after she lost her job at the hospital:

I started trying to run an ice cream truck after they fired me at the hospital. Didn't have a regular ice cream truck. The boys just brought a pick up truck. We set the cooler in the back, and we ran it from that. It was a step up truck. So I couldn't walk through to get my ice cream. We had to get out of the cab, climb up in the back, and sell our ice cream.

She and several family members now run a moving and repair service business out of her home.

Another woman works in a grocery store and also works with relatives in a variety of business activities. Of all the work she has done since the strike, she liked putting together house trailers the best:

I'd help set up the trailers when they'd come in. The double-wides. Put them together. Trim them out. Any little bit of carpenter work I could do. I'd do all the electric hook-ups. Like if they hung chandeliers. I'd put lights on the outside doors. It just came natural.

Other women found jobs as cooks, waitresses, and sales clerks. Several women were hired by a nursing home. Two women leased and operated a hotel restaurant for a time. One woman has held a variety of clerical positions. Two women got skilled jobs weighing coal shipments for a coal tippie. One of them now operates computerized scales and schedules shipments. Another woman works for a radio station where she occasionally dedicates late night music to the strikers.

Some hospital strikers did return to the hospital. They found working conditions somewhat improved. Management has made some concessions in a series of moves to appease employees and block any further union efforts.

Some women have retired, but most remain active in the paid labor force. Whether or not they returned to the hospital, status in the local labor market remained fairly constant for the Pike County women.

In Harlan County, strike involvement prompted dramatic changes in the lives of many of the women. One of the most obvious changes was the shift in their labor market status in the years after the strike. Only seven of the twenty women were still full time homemakers a decade after the strike.

At first glance, the women's desire to find paying jobs could be interpreted as a desire for a more secure household economic base than coal mining could offer. They had, after all, just lived through a violent and prolonged strike. This motive is suggested in the comments of some of the women.

One woman felt she must defend her decision to go work, and she defined her job as insurance for her family. Her husband has not had a mining job since the Brookside Mine was closed in 1981. She explained what she was doing this way:

You can't never tell when you may need it. If I quit work and [he] got a job, if it was in a coal mines, there'd be another strike. You always need something to fall back on. If I hadn't been

working we'd probably lost everything we had when he got laid off. Once all the savings and the unemployment run out we would have probably lost it all had I not been working.

Other comments suggest more complicated motivations for entering the paid labor force. Indeed, many of the women said that their decision to look for jobs caused considerable conflict in their households. One woman found a job a few years after the strike, but it was over her husband's strong opposition:

I just said, "I'm going to find me a job." [He] said, "Naw." I said, "Yes I am. I'm going to go to work." "Naw," he said, "you don't need to go to work." So I went more or less out of spite.

Another woman started her first paying job during the strike, but she quit that job to make peace with her husband:

He always was the breadwinner until the strike. I went to work then. But as soon as he got back to work he made me quit. I liked working. He just always said, "It's a man's place", the support.

Still she found full time work with a religious mission in Harlan County soon after the strike. Since the Brookside mine shut down her husband has been helping out at the mission as well.

Another woman trained as a nurse's aide, but she has not been able to find a job in a hospital or clinic. She does private duty nursing a few days a week and cleans a grade school thirty hours a week. Two women are self-employed and own their own businesses (a body conditioning/physical therapy center and a neighborhood grocery store).

Two women whose husbands still work in the mines went to vocational school. One woman learned carpentry and rebuilt her house trailer. From time to time she does custom remodeling. Another woman learned auto body repair. Occasionally she works with her husband who rebuilds cars in addition to working in the mines.

For some of these women their post-strike work is non-market labor, but the locus of their work moved outside their homes. Many of these women stayed involved in UMWA activities for a time after the strike. Several walked other UMWA picket lines at individual mines on strike for union representation. Some did strike support work during the 1974-75 national mine strike which broke out within a few months of the Brookside victory. Some women were invited to talk about their experiences at labor rallies and progressive social events in Appalachia and elsewhere.

One of these women is a full-time homemaker caring for her elderly parents, but she dreams of going back to school and becoming an organizer:

If I didn't have my mommy and daddy I'd rather go back to school than anything. I'd love to. I'd just like to go back to school and make my mind up what I wanted to take. Really I'd like to be an organizer. I sure would. For the mine workers.

Another woman wanted to help organize more mines in eastern Kentucky. She spoke eloquently about her intention to continue working as a union activist:

While [husband] is working I'll help organize Highsplint. We'll go from one mine to the next...Then Arjay. Then go from Arjay someplace else. Just get the UMWA everywhere.⁹

This did not happen, however. She and her husband were divorced soon after the strike, and she moved out of the state. She works now cleaning houses.

One woman is proud to have been asked to talk about coal mining at a Harlan County elementary school:

The Head Start teacher said, "We've got a science show. We'd like for you to fix like a miner and come over." Put me on a pair of pants, and an old sawmill shirt, and blacked myself all over, tucked up my hair. Put me on a bank cap. Hung me a carbide light. I went over there.

Another woman was active in the Harlan County Black Lung Association for a time. The grocery store she now operates is a meeting place for UMWA miners, and she retains her strong interest in union politics. She operates an unofficial social work service from the store helping people get legal aid and emergency relief, even pressuring civic organizations to provide eyeglasses for poor school children. Another of the women worked with widows of a mine disaster that killed twenty-six men at the Scotia Coal Company in 1976.

When the strike ended most of the Harlan County women moved away from dependent housewife status. They sought new work experiences and often became involved in social issues. Participation in the coal strike, then, prompted many of these women to look for employment, alter the nature of their homework, renegotiate gender relationships in their households, and participate in public affairs extending their lives far beyond the boundaries of homemaking in the coal camp.

GENDER, SOCIAL CLASS, AND SCHOOL

Education and the acquisition of skills are important individual "credits" considered essential to an individual's ability to compete for jobs in the formal economy. The lack of education and skills, then, is often associated with a greater likelihood that an individual will fall into and not be able to move beyond poverty. Public school experiences of women in these two strikes suggest that gender operates to constrain women's ability to earn education credentials which might help them maneuver in a restricted and sex-segregated local labor market.

Among the two groups, the Harlan County women had completed less formal education (Table 11) than the Pike County women. Fewer had completed the eighth grade, fewer had gone to or completed high school, and only one had been through any vocational training programs.

In contrast, all of the hospital strikers had at least completed the eighth grade before quitting school. Of these twenty-four women, four had attended some high school, and four had completed high school. Nine of them had taken advantage of government manpower training programs. In most cases these programs had helped them get jobs at the hospital.

DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL

Despite this difference in educational level, women from each group gave similar reasons for quitting school. The most common reasons cited were financial. Many women said they simply could not afford to attend school, as the following comments illustrate:

I had started high school. They'd be seven of us in the family and I really couldn't afford [school]. So I just got a job. Started doing restaurant work.

Well, my grandmother couldn't afford to send me to high school. That's the reason I didn't go. I didn't get no education. For people were poor. I had to walk off the top of that mountain, come over here to school. I got the primer, half the fifth and half the sixth. So I knowed nothing about talking to no reporters. I knowed nothing about heading up letters, like to write an individual person.

These were skills she found that she desperately wanted during the strike.

One of the leaders in the coal strike, had been a very good student but ignored her school principal's objections and quit:

I promised the principal at the high school that I would come back and take the test and go on to graduate. I really and truly thought I would, because he had told me he didn't want me to leave. I was tellin' him, "No, I can make \$35 a week baby sitting." I had to buy all the school clothes I had. Any food that I had at school I had to buy because dad just couldn't make it. When the mines worked, they didn't work enough for the men to support the size family that my mother and daddy had.

Several of the women spoke of feeling uncomfortable in school because of status differences. These "injuries" of class distinctions pushed at least one of the Brookside women to quit school:

I passed two years in the sixth grade. I didn't like that teacher. I threatened to whip her. Me, a young kid, wanting to fight her. I didn't like her attitude. It was like she was better than the student. She had things, and she'd flaunt it. She just showed off. It turned me off. So I finally just married.

Other women told of family crises which worsened already difficult financial situations and caused them to drop out of school:

I left home to work for people, because our home burnt up and we lost everything we had. I had to quit school and go to work.

I was going to high school. We was up in Michigan working then. [I got] three years. But dad was on strike, and they didn't have much money. I knew I couldn't afford it. So I just quit.

This woman reared seven children, and at the time I interviewed her she had just told a potential employer: "I don't have any skills but raising kids."

In three instances, women from the coal strike quit school because of their own serious childhood illnesses. Financially pressed working class families were not able to provide extra support which might have kept these women in school. One said she loved school and had dreamed of becoming a school teacher:

We just really had a good time. We had a little slate and our slate pencils. I loved geography other than anything else in our school. We would have spelling bees, and I couldn't wait until we got into that. Sometimes I would miss one being sick. I had asthma or something bad in the winter time, and they wouldn't let me go. I'd have to walk from, it'd be about two mile and a half I'd have to walk to school. They wasn't no buses. I went to the fourth grade.

Usually family crises were interpreted in gender terms. Female children quit school to assume work which was necessary to keep households viable. For example:

My mother got real sick and had to have surgery. For two years [she] wasn't able to do anything. I had a brother a little over a year old. I just quit school and took all the responsibility of the family.

One of the Brookside women, who still dreams of becoming a nurse, said:

I went about two weeks [high school] and quit. Daddy was sick. When he couldn't work we couldn't afford to go. I stayed home and helped Mommy out with him.

Another woman, who worked many years at the hospital as a cook, quit after the eighth grade:

After my mother died I didn't get to go. See, I was the only girl among six brothers. I was the only girl at home.

She talked at length about enjoying the small country schools she attended. Still there was no question that she, rather than one of her brothers, drop out of school when her mother died.

One woman described blatant sexism as the reason her education ended:

Mommy didn't believe in girls getting a education. I turned sixteen, and I had to quit and stay home. I don't know why she believed that girls shouldn't get an education, but she just wouldn't let us go. She's got five girls and not a one of us graduated from high school.

Several of the women said they quit school to get married, but in each case marriage was seen as a solution to other problems. One of the Brookside women quit the eighth grade when she was eighteen and married a much older man to escape an abusive home situation:

I wasn't allowed to go anywhere by myself. Dad would whip me good. Dad was pretty rough on me. He would whip me and I guess, you know, when you're young - I took off. I wrote them and I told them I run off from home. Mom signed the papers for us to get married.

In some instances, however, a married daughter meant one less child to support in financially troubled households. One woman's father had been on strike trying to organize a mine under the UMWA. When the strike was lost her family was in serious trouble:

They [coal company] started giving house notices [evictions]. So people had to move. My dad got this house, and we moved. We did have it rough for a while. He applied for his miner's pension and the black lung, and that took time. My mom had to go out and do housework for people in order to make ends meet. There was three of us in high school, and it was rough going. I stayed down there about six months and married and moved back up here.

GOING BACK TO SCHOOL

As adults, the women often repeated this pattern of personal sacrifice. Gendered status in households and family units continued to take priority over personal desires for further education.

One woman made several attempts to become a Registered Nurse. She trained as a "Girl in Blue" during World War II. She also took training under the federal Manpower and Development Training Act: "I

got paid while I was going to school that time." Later, while she was on strike, she completed one year at a community college toward an RN:

I carried a whole load, full load, sure did. Fundamentals of nursing and med-surg. Everything.

She could afford school this time because her union strike benefits amounted to more than she earned working full time as a nurse's aide at the hospital:

I was off from school a long time before I even attempted that RN. I only took the eighth grade. Then I took the GED and passed it! That's what I got in the college on, and a letter from Dr. Ratliff that I was one of his special nurses. But then I got hired back at the hospital. I've got all my books, honey. Some of them wanted me to sell them. They said, "Why don't you just sell them?" I said, "Uh huh. I want to keep my books.

She retired at 65 and recently learned she could go back to the community college without paying:

I could finish it and not even have to pay. But, my husband don't want me to. Somebody is all the time blocking me for what I've always dreamed about.

Another nurse's aide dropped out of high school because of a family crisis. Later, married, family difficulties interfered once again:

I went and signed up and was accepted. My youngest son had to have his appendix taken out. So that knocked me out there. That's the reason I didn't go on. I couldn't leave my baby. I'd made a LPN if it hadn't been for that.

In their youth and as adults, these women were expected to manage and support households rather than pursue their own education or develop marketable skills and qualifications. All of these women had quit public school at a young age and most had married young (Table 12). Their involvement in the strikes, however, was catalyst which prompted many of them to return to school, earn a GED, or acquire new skills.

THE STRIKES AND GOING BACK TO SCHOOL

Renewed educational efforts were most dramatic in the aftermath of the coal strike. Five of the twenty Brookside women took some further schooling or training after the strike. One woman enrolled in history and psychology classes at a nearby community college. Two women learned skilled trades in the area vocational school, and one woman trained as a licensed nurse's aide. Another woman had nearly completed an undergraduate degree at the time of her interview. She enrolled at a community college under a federal support program:

I started out in Elementary Education. Last semester I decided I'm going to Business Administration. I sort of cross between the two. Some federal money was allocated for education. They'd pay for books, tuition. Anything you needed toward an education. That's when I really started back to school. I had thought about it for a long time. When the money was allocated I thought, "Well, somebody else is going to pay for it. Why not?" If nothing happens come December I'll have my Associates Degree. Then if I decide to go on then I can.

One woman is determined to earn a Ph.D. She went to college after the strike, finished an undergraduate degree, and had almost completed a Master's Degree at the time of her interview.

I was the first one [in family] to get a Bachelor's. My two brothers and a sister, they had Associates, but I was the first one to get a Bachelor's. I'm going to be the first to get a Doctorate. Let me tell you!

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Popular depictions of generations of people debilitated by poverty have been challenged by research demonstrating high levels of labor force activity and high levels of income-generating activity among the rural poor.¹⁰ My research corroborates these findings. In addition, it demonstrates high levels of women's work effort which has no direct financial compensation for impoverished families but which is necessary to keep households viable. Further, this research demonstrates determination and initiative among women in the face of limited options for education, training, and acquisition of labor force experience.

In Pike County, the hospital strikers are either heads of households or major contributors to household income. They work in paid labor where ever they can find it. Their motivations are primarily economic, but they are also in the labor market to find stimulation and satisfaction in non-home work. They make repeated efforts to improve their educations and qualifications, despite burdens of economic and household labor. Their comments and work histories indicate initiative, desire, and ingenuity despite limited economic opportunity and constraining gender roles and attitudes.

In Harlan County, the Brookside women moved from traditional gender statuses in households to active participation in a coal strike which promised to improve their household circumstances. Subsequently many of the women have taken steps to acquire new skills, further their educations, and move into paid labor and non-paid labor outside their homes. In the process they have re-negotiated constraining gender relations.

Work and schooling are understood through a "gendered lens" in working class households in these counties. Women's work is often equated with unpaid and marginalized home labor. Still, many women are heads of households, and all contribute both paid and unpaid labor essential to household survival. Women have the most restricted labor market options, yet they are active and essential workers in the local and household economies of this region.

Education for females is often not considered a "family priority", particularly when households have a marginal or vulnerable financial basis. Any unusual stress in these households usually means women interrupt schooling to pull families through hard times. Further, home work and household responsibilities stay with women throughout their lives making attempts to improve educations and qualifications particularly difficult.

Gender relations influence the way women acquire or fail to acquire skills, education, and work experience. Gender configures a constraining female status in households and family units. Individual initiatives which disrupt gender relations often result in contested gender statuses.

Efforts to address poverty in Appalachia must incorporate a gender-informed analysis of local labor markets, schools and educational programs, and household structure and operations.

FOOTNOTES

¹A federally defined subregion of the larger Appalachian Region, Central Appalachia consists of sixty counties located in four states: Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia, and Tennessee (Appalachian Regional Commission 1964).

²Some explanations of regional poverty stress cultural factors, positing a subcultural identity which leaves residents ill-equipped and unmotivated to adjust to modern economic arrangements (Campbell 1969; Stephenson 1968; Weller 1965).

³The issue of representation was not resolved in this strike until 1980, and legal skirmishes continued until the spring of 1983, nearly 11 years after the strike began.

⁴At the time of the strikes coal mining jobs, except for clerical and office work, were barred to women. As late as 1975, 99.8% of all U.S. coal miners were men. There are accounts of women working in small, contract or family-run coal mines early in this century and during World War II in the U.S. Still coal mining employment remained blocked to women until sex discrimination suits were filed and won under the Equal Employment Opportunity Act (Hall 1977).

⁵This observation is in line with recent arguments against narrow definitions which equate work with market labor in the formal economy (Gerstel and Gross 1987; Smith 1987). Such definitions fail to capture the range of women's economic activity and the actual social relations surrounding it.

⁶All quotations in this paper are from the author's interviews unless otherwise noted.

⁷In one other household the children were grown and living nearby.

⁸In 1965 the hospital began to take advantage of a new National Manpower Development and Training program. In effect this program subsidized the hospital's in-service training for nurse's aides, orderlies, ward clerks and dietary aides. Administered by the Mayo Vocational School, over a hundred hospital personnel had gone through the program by the time of the strike.

⁹*Harlan County U.S.A.* Out-takes, Box 197, CR 930.

¹⁰Kenneth Deavers demonstrated this for the United States in November 1986 at a meeting on Rural Poverty at the Brookings Institution. Similarly, Mary Beth Pudup's (1990) research on the informal economy in West Virginia confirms a long history of income-generating activity among poor families in Appalachia.

Table 1. Income and Earnings for Kentucky, Pike and Harlan Counties: 1969

	<u>The State</u>	<u>Pike County</u>	<u>Harlan County</u>
Total Families			
Income, all families	825,222	15,524	9,456
% earning:			
< \$3,000	18.5%	27.6%	31.7%
3,000 - 3,999	7.3%	10.0%	12.5%
4,000 - 4,999	6.8%	8.5%	8.3%
5,000 - 5,999	7.1%	9.2%	8.4%
6,000 - 6,999	7.1%	7.3%	6.6%
7,000 - 7,999	7.2%	7.9%	6.6%
8,000 - 8,999	7.2%	7.3%	6.6%
9,000 - 9,999	6.3%	5.7%	4.3%
10,000 - 11,999	10.9%	6.8%	5.6%
12,000 - 14,999	10.0%	5.0%	4.8%
15,000 - 24,999	9.2%	3.6%	3.5%
25,000 - 49,999	2.0%	0.7%	0.9%
50,000 or more	<u>0.4%</u>	<u>0.4%</u>	<u>0.1%</u>
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Median Income	\$7,441	\$6,326	\$4,682
Per capita			
income of persons	\$2,437	\$1,706	\$1,593
Median Earnings, persons			
16 years and older			
Total Males	\$6,369	\$5,995	\$5,682
Total Females	\$3,357	\$2,694	\$2,611

Table 2. Poverty Status for Kentucky, Pike and Harlan Counties: 1969

	<u>The State</u>	<u>Pike County</u>	<u>Harlan County</u>
<u>Income less than Poverty Level</u>			
<u>Families</u>	158,779	4,930	3,442
% of all families	19.2%	31.8%	36.2%
% receiving public assistance income	22.3%	20.0%	27.1%
Mean family size	3.64%	4.09%	4.18%
<u>Families with Female Head</u>	36,343	853	871
% with related children under 18 years	75.4%	68.7%	70.0%
<u>Unrelated Individuals</u>	105,681	1,519	1,446
% of all unrelated individuals	51.2%	68.2%	67.6%
% receiving public assistance	15.4%	19.6%	21.9%
<u>Persons</u>	718,313	21,701	15,740
% of all persons	22.9%	35.7%	42.2%
% receiving SS income	19.5%	18.3%	19.3%
% 65 years and over	18.1%	13.8%	12.9%
% receiving SS income	75.0%	69.9%	77.4%
Related children under 18 years	272,710	9,163	6,603
% living with both parents	66.0%	74.9%	68.8%
<u>Households</u>	165,912	4,353	4,152
% of all households	22.1%	35.4%	40.6%
In owner occupied units	81,233	2,395	2,008
Mean value of unit	\$ 8,282	\$ 6,398	\$ 4,692
In renter occupied units	84,679	1,958	2,144
Mean gross rent	\$55	\$37	\$37
% lack some or all plumbing	34.6%	54.8%	59.8%

**Table 3. Employment Status for Kentucky, Pike and Harlan Counties: 1970
(Persons 16 Years and Over)**

	<u>The State</u>	<u>Pike County</u>	<u>Harlan County</u>
<u>Employment Status</u>			
Total Persons	2,227,425	40,364	25,423
Civilian Labor Force	1,141,594	16,170	9,166
Employed	1,088,758	15,108	8,515
Unemployed	58,836	1,062	651
% Civilian labor force	5.2%	6.6%	7.1%
Not in Labor Force	1,045,863	24,169	16,247
% of total persons	46.9%	59.8%	63.9%
Workers in 1969	1,331,936	17,418	10,019
% Worked 50-52 weeks	56.3%	54.6%	47.5%
% Worked < 50 weeks	43.7%	45.3%	52.2%

Table 4. Industry of Employed Persons for Pike and Harlan Counties: 1970
(Persons 16 Years and Over)

<u>Industry</u>	<u>Pike County</u>	<u>Harlan County</u>
Total Employed Persons	15,108	8,515
% employed in:		
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	0.3%	0.6%
Mining	34.4%	24.7%
Construction	7.5%	6.2%
Manufacturing	4.2%	7.5%
Transportation	5.1%	2.7%
Communication	1.3%	0.6%
Utilities, sanitary services	2.2%	1.3%
Wholesale trade	2.4%	3.5%
Food, bakery, dairy products	3.4%	4.0%
Eating, drinking places	1.6%	1.8%
Retail trade	10.2%	11.7%
Finance, business, related services	3.5%	4.4%
Private households	1.3%	2.1%
Other personal services	2.1%	3.4%
Entertainment, recreation services	0.4%	0.4%
Health services, including hospitals	4.6%	6.3%
Education	9.4%	11.0%
Other professional, related services	2.4%	3.6%
Public administration	<u>3.7%</u>	<u>4.2%</u>
	100.0%	100.0%

**Table 5. Industry of Employed Persons by Sex for Pike County: 1970
(Persons 16 Years and Over)**

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
<u>Industry</u>		
Total Employed Persons	11,088	4,020
% employed in:		
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	0.5%	0.0%
*Mining, construction	55.3%	5.0%
Manufacturing	4.9%	2.2%
Transportation	6.2%	1.9%
*Communications, utilities, sanitary services	3.4%	3.6%
Utilities, sanitary services		
Wholesale trade	2.9%	1.0%
Food, bakery, dairy products	2.0%	7.2%
Eating, drinking places	0.2%	5.4%
Retail trade	8.6%	14.4%
Finance, business, related services	3.4%	3.5%
*Private households, other personal services	1.1%	9.9%
Entertainment, recreation services	0.5%	0.2%
Health services, including hospitals	1.8%	12.6%
Education	4.9%	21.8%
Other professional, related services	2.1%	3.5%
Public administration	<u>2.2%</u>	<u>7.8%</u>
	100.0%	100.0%

*Industry category differs from Table 4: census combines categories in reporting county level data by sex.

**Table 6. Industry of Employed Persons by Sex for Harlan County: 1970
(Persons 16 Years and Over)**

<u>Industry</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Total Employed Persons	5,854	2,661
% employed in:		
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	0.9%	0.0%
Mining, construction	44.0%	2.1%
Manufacturing	9.0%	4.2%
Transportation	3.8%	0.4%
*Communication, utilities, sanitary services	2.2%	1.0%
Utilities, sanitary services		
Wholesale trade	4.5%	1.2%
Food, bakery, dairy products	3.5%	5.0%
Eating, drinking places	0.1%	5.4%
Retail trade	8.8%	18.1%
Finance, business, related services	4.8%	3.5%
*Private households, other personal services	2.0%	13.4%
Entertainment, recreation services	0.5%	0.3%
Health services, including hospitals	2.3%	15.2%
Education	6.5%	20.9%
Other professional, related services	2.9%	5.1%
Public administration	<u>4.2%</u>	<u>4.2%</u>
	100.0%	100.0%

*Industry category differs from Table 4: census combines categories in reporting county level data by sex.

Table 7. Marital Status for Kentucky, Pike and Harlan Counties: 1970

	<u>The State</u>	<u>Pike County</u>	<u>Harlan County</u>
<u>Marital Status</u>			
Males, 14 years and over	1,141,799	21,195	12,802
Single	27.9%	27.7%	29.3%
Married	65.3%	67.5%	64.6%
Separated	1.9%	0.8%	1.1%
Widowed	3.0%	2.7%	3.2%
Divorced	2.7%	2.1%	2.7%
% Married	66.3%	67.6%	64.7%
Females, 14 years and over	1,221,486	22,421	14,352
Single	20.5%	21.2%	21.3%
Married	61.0%	64.8%	59.1%
Separated	1.5%	1.0%	1.8%
Widowed	13.1%	11.3%	16.4%
Divorced	3.8%	2.8%	3.3%
% Married	62.5%	64.8%	59.1%

**Table 8. Household and Family Characteristics for Kentucky,
Pike and Harlan Counties: 1970**

	<u>The State</u>	<u>Pike County</u>	<u>Harlan County</u>
All Persons	3,218,706	61,059	37,370
Number of households	983,665	17,335	11,168
Persons in households	3,118,607	60,614	37,133
Primary individual:			
Male	733,118	13,919	7,985
Female	109,087	1,500	1,431
Persons per household	3.17	3.50	3.32
All Families	820,880	15,419	9,416
% with own children under 18 years	54.3%	57.7%	52.5%
% with own children under 6 years only	26.0%	27.8%	23.9%
Husband-Wife Families	710,223	13,388	7,673
% of all families	86.5%	86.8%	81.5%
% with own children under 18 years	55.6%	59.4%	53.4%
% with own children under 6 years only	13.6%	29.0%	25.5%
Female-Headed Families	87,762	1,500	1,431
% of all families	10.7%	9.7%	15.2%
% with own children under 18 years	50.4%	48.7%	52.9%
% with own children under 6 years only	7.1%	16.7%	16.3%
% under 18 years old	35.0%	38.0%	37.0%
% under 18 living with both parents	82.0%	83.0%	76.0%
% 65 years old and over	11.0%	9.0%	11.0%

Table 9. Waged Labor Experience of Women in Pikeville and Brookside Case Studies Prior to Strikes.

	<u>Pikeville Respondents</u>		<u>Brookside Respondents</u>	
Held paying jobs prior to strike?				
Yes	24	100%	14	70%
No	0	---	6	30%
N =	<u>24</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>100%</u>

Table 10. Household and Family Characteristics for Women in Pikeville and Brookside Case Studies. (1972 and 1973 respectively)

	<u>Pikeville Respondents</u>		<u>Brookside Respondents</u>	
Husband-Wife Families				
with children	10	41.7%	18	90%
with no children	2	8.3%	1	5%
Female-Headed Families				
with own children only	4	16.7%	0	--
with no children	2	8.3%	0	--
extended family group	2	8.3%	0	--
Single, roommate	1	4.2%	0	--
Over 18 living with one or both parents	1	4.2%	0	--
and own children	2	8.3%	1	5%
N =	<u>24</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>100%</u>

Table 11. Educational Characteristics for Women in Pikeville and Brookside Case Studies at the time of the strikes.

	<u>Pikeville Respondents</u>		<u>Brookside Respondents</u>	
Years of School Completed				
Elementary < 8 years	0	---	8	40%
8 years	16	66.6%	4	20%
High School: 1-3 years	4	16.7%	6	30%
4 years	4	16.7%	2	10%
College	0	---	0	---
N =	24	100%	20	100%
Manpower training programs	9	37.5%	1	5%

Table 12. Age at First Marriage of Women in Pikeville and Brookside Case Studies

	<u>Pikeville Respondents</u>	<u>Brookside Respondents</u>
Age at marriage		
15	1	6
16	2	2
17	3	2
18	1	4
19	5	2
20-29	8	4
30-39	2	0
40 or over	0	0
Never married	2	0
N =	24	20
% married during teen years	50%	80%
% married after teen years	42%	20%
% never married	8%	---

APPENDIX I

INVENTORY OF MARKET LABOR PRIOR TO STRIKE PARTICIPATION:

Pike County hospital strikers

- *personal services:
housecleaning, motel cleaning, office and apartment cleaning, baby sitting, personal care, pressing clothes in a laundry, cleaning machines at a laundromat;
- *health services:
aide in nursing home and hospital;
- *retail sales:
clerking in shoe stores, discount stores, five and dime stores; groceries, drug stores, and clothing stores; door to door sales of household products and cosmetics; telephone sales; dairy farm sales collection;
- *restaurants and food service:
waitressing, cooking, dishwashing;
- *farm labor:
tending gardens, harvesting produce;
- *manpower training programs:
nurse's aide, sewing project, special diet preparation;
- *governmental work:
U.S. Census taker;
- *clerical:
government official's office;
- *proprietary:
managing small motel;
- *manufacturing:
WWII riveter on bombers and repairman in plant.

Harlan County women from coal strike

- *personal services:
housework, childcare, laundry, hotels
- *health services:
nurse's aide
- *retail sales:
groceries, miscellaneous
- *restaurants and food service:
waitressing, short order cook
- *farm labor:
tending gardens, farm fields
- *manufacturing:
assembly

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